

I am a singer/songwriter living in Chicago, as well as a concernedcitizen/radio listener. I am very unhappy with the radio/music industry right now - it seems to be run with just a handful of people making all the decisions about what and who is played on the air. As a struggling independent musician, this is especially frustrating because it's impossible to get any local music played on 'mainstream' stations, and the music they do play is total crap. The Industry really needs to re-vamp its system and realize that most normal people just want to listen to good music, not the bubble-gum pop crap from untalented, sleazy-looking 'singers' that is being forced down our throats every hour on the hour. Anyone who is not an adolescent or teenager is left out and we are getting sick of it.

In Chicago, as far as I know, we only have one station that plays local artists sometimes, WXRT. I believe some local college stations play local music too, but now that the cost of broadcasting over the internet has become astronomical, I don't always get a chance to listen on regular radio. I used to listen to lots of local stations via the internet, but after the new rules & fees were put into place, all of my favorite ones were shut down. This is a disgrace -- the internet is supposed to be free, and although as an artist I know it's important to get paid for your music being played, I'm sure independent (and non-rich) musicians understand that the internet IS free and they are not going to make as much money as they would on the radio. Most musicians just want their music played and want a decent compensation for it - not millions of dollars. I absolutely do NOT feel that the major radio stations serve our local music community. They play the same songs over and over and over again, and while I understand that certain songs get requested a lot from listeners, I also know as a member of the music industry that it's not requests that get the music played, it's payola or pay-for-play, which should not only be completely illegal, but the amount of times you can play a song in a 24-hour period should be limited. Many songs are ruined for me because they are played so much I just want to throw up if I hear the song again. There needs to be a better balance of good music, not just the top 10 songs of the week.

I do believe that all programming decisions should be made at the local station level. I am very good friends with a DJ on one of the major stations in Chicago, and she is so frustrated with all the rules & regulations about when she can play what and exactly what she can and cannot play. A lot of great local music is completely left off these stations with the strict rules the DJs must follow, and because of that no local music is getting to the people. The few stations that do play local music are just not as popular and really only have a few slots of time for local music anyway. I think the programming decisions should be between the DJs and the Program Director. They are DJs, they know music, and they usually have much better taste in music than whomever feeds it to them now on the national level.

Anything local should count as local programming, whether it be music, news or community events.

Stations should not really be penalized for not working in the community, but if they do sponsor activities, fundraisers, etc. then they should get some extra consideration or money or something.

PAYOLA DOES STILL EXIST AND SHOULD BE CEASED IMMEDIATELY. Any payment in any form of any kind, including 'gifts' should be illegal and there should be very harsh penalties. The playing field needs to be leveled for local

artists. The 'indie promoter' paying stations is definitely Payola and should be illegal as well. If someone wants to purchase actual air time to air a commercial for their artist, that should be ok since the payment is out in the open and it would have to very obviously be an ad, not just a clip of a song. As a musician, I'm not sure if radio stations are seeking payment for front and back announcing, but if they are that should be illegal too as it is blatant bribery and MUST violate the FCC's sponsorship identification rules.

'Voice Tracking' is also an abominable practice. If a station is going to use voice tracking, they should have to announce to their listeners that it is pre-recorded, not a live DJ, or that they are in a different place than the local community they are serving.

National playlists are completely bogus. This is one of the biggest problems in the radio industry today - it's all being run by just a handful of people instead of the local stations doing the programming, and the local listeners are the ones who lose out. The listeners are sick of having to hear the same songs over and over again because some large corporate radio owner says so. It completely takes power from the local programming and diminishes the diversity and quality of good songwriting, replacing it with fluffy, bubble-gum crap that we are all sick of. Stations should be required to play certain amounts of local music, and they should be able to play the music they want to play, not what some record executive tells them to play.

Low Power FM stations would be ok, but it's ridiculous that it's even being given as an option instead of just treating all stations alike and giving them back their power to play their own programming. We wouldn't need LPFMs if regular stations would play good local music as they should.

Please address these issues with a public hearing/forum. The public are the ones being forced to listen to the crap being played and are the ones losing out. WE WANT OUR GOOD MUSIC AND GOOD DJs BACK!! Thank you for your consideration, I hope you sincerely listen to the public's concerns.